Report
Master Middle Eastern studies - Internship
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Internship report
Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Istanbul

Period:
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"The advantage of a small country is that it has a lot of foreign country."

- Joseph Luns (Dutch minister of Foreign Affairs between 1952-1971)
Introduction

Between January and July 2018, I have been working as an intern at the Dutch consulate general in Istanbul. This internship report is meant to highlight what my activities have been and what I have learned in this period. Apart from that – to get a good understanding of the situation and the work – I will give some background information regarding the Dutch-Turkish relationship, the history of the Dutch consulate general in Istanbul and the activities that it is undertaking.

Seeing that my work has been rather diverse, this report will be structured in a way to reflect this. Thus, the “activities” section will be subdivided in: Matra (short for: “Maatschappelijke Transformatie”, i.e. “societal transformation”) & Human Rights, Public Diplomacy & Communication and last - but not least - Sports. Beforehand it should, however, be noticed that in my work, there has been no such clear subdivision. Rather, work was often mixed up, based on the needs of that moment. Moreover, it is hard (if not impossible) to make a hard distinction between these activities. Sports, for instance, has much common ground with public diplomacy and can be used rather well as an instrument within a public diplomacy strategy. The same can be said about projects that are undertaken from the Matra & Human Rights funds (although these can also “harm” the image of a country, for instance, because a project is seen as “Western intervention” in Turkish matters).

Regarding all my activities at the consulate general, I had much to learn; not only because I had no experience in the field of public diplomacy or human rights’ work, but also because I had limited knowledge regarding Turkish ideas and sentiments in these matters. Before my internship, I had never visited Turkey and as such, my views were mostly based on the few Turkish contacts I had in the Netherlands, the things that were written and broadcasted in the Dutch news and the classes I had been taking at the University of Groningen. My knowledge of Istanbul was, likewise, rather limited and dates to 2007 when Geert Mak’s “De Brug” (“The Bridge”) was published and distributed as the “boekenweek geschenk” (“bookweek gift”).

My fascination for Turkey, and specifically for Istanbul, was not only triggered by Geert Mak’s book, but likewise by the lectures during my History bachelor. As such, when the consulate general was looking for a communication and public diplomacy intern, I was immediately interested. But I can give more reasons for why I regarded this internship as very valuable. First of all, in the context of my Middle Eastern Studies master’s program, Turkey can be considered one of the most interesting countries in the region, being it politically, historically or culturally. Moreover, there is a longstanding relationship between the Netherlands and Turkey, dating back to the days of the Dutch Republic and the Ottoman Empire, whereby (albeit it based on pragmatism) the two worked together during the Eighty Years War (1568-1648). It was the Ottoman Sultan who acknowledged Dutch sovereignty as one of the first countries in the world, and already in the early 17th century, the Dutch were allowed to send an ambassador to Istanbul. Official diplomatic relations between the two countries date back to 1612 and the 400th anniversary was celebrated in 2012. Although the situation soured after March 11 2017 (with the Dutch government expelling the Turkish minister of family affairs, Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya), connections between Turkey and the Netherlands remain strong in other ways. After all, Turks are the largest group with a so-
called “non-western” background in the Netherlands (almost 400,000).\(^1\) Also, the Netherlands remains the biggest foreign direct investor in Turkey and large multinationals, such as ING Bank, Unilever, Philips and Shell are doing business in Turkey.\(^2\) Thus, cultural and economic ties remain strong.

A second reason for why I regarded an internship at the Dutch consulate general as valuable, was because I felt it could really contribute to my professional development. Whereas I had work experience in business and in journalism, I had never worked for the government before, let alone written a public diplomacy strategy. Likewise, I had no experience in the field of human right’s work, but it should be mentioned that before I started my internship at the consulate general, it was not clear that this would be part of my activities, (and the same goes for the sport-related work). At the start of my internship, my workload was discussed and, seeing that there would be a separate intern for the communication work, it was decided that I would work on Matra and Human Rights and sports beside my public diplomacy work.

A third reason is that I considered living abroad as something very valuable for my personal and professional development. Although I expected the changes to be rather significant, I nonetheless underestimated the impact that it would have on me and I must admit that it took me a while to adjust to the new situation. It is simple things as going to the supermarket that are suddenly more difficult than back at home, if only because everything is written in another language. Not only did I have to get to know a new job, I also had to acquaint myself with a new city, a new environment and new people. Although I will come back to this aspect in the evaluation part of this document, I can already mention that I indeed think this experience has significantly contributed to my development. The fact that I will stay in Istanbul for another year and work as a Senior Officer General Affairs as part of the Syrian Team (which, due to the situation in Syria, is based in Istanbul and working from the consulate general), should show that I managed to become comfortable when it comes to living in Istanbul.

I am very grateful for having been given the opportunity to do this internship and I would like to explicitly thank Leyla Barlas-Aslan, Quirine van der Hoeven and consul general Bart van Bolhuis for all their advice, support and patience. I also want to thank my fellow interns Juul, Tomas and Orkide, with whom my experience in Istanbul would not have been the same.

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The Dutch consulate general in Istanbul

Diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey go back a long time and seeing that Istanbul used to be the capital of the Ottoman Empire, it is logical that the Dutch presence was concentrated there. The Palais de Hollande, in which the consulate general is housed, was built in 1714 after this had been commissioned by the Dutch envoy Jacobus Colyer. After having exchanged several hands, the building became property of the Dutch state after 1826 and has consequently been used as seat of the diplomatic representation in Istanbul. Interesting to note: the Palais de Hollande is the oldest possession of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs abroad. Until the establishment of the Turkish republic in 1923, the Dutch embassy was based in Istanbul. With Ankara becoming the Turkish capital in 1923, the embassy moved to Ankara and the mission in Istanbul became a consulate. This shift has also entailed a shift in the kind of work that is being done from Istanbul.

Although there are some similarities between embassies and consulates (for instance: whether you go to an embassy or a consulate, you will receive the same consular\(^3\) and economic services\(^4\)), there are also some important differences. In general, embassies and consulates are government representations in a foreign country and are only established if the sovereignty of a country is recognized. A country will only establish one embassy in another nation, but can choose to have several consulates and/or consulates general in various cities. Beside the embassy in Ankara and the consulate general in Istanbul, the Netherlands has four honorary consulates that are headed by a local representative who, in addition to their job, perform a selected number of consular and economic tasks. In Turkey, these honorary consulates are in Antalya, Izmir, Marmaris and Gaziantep. Whereas ambassadors are the highest ranking diplomatic representatives of a country and represent their country in the whole of the host country, a consul general represents its country in only a part of the host country and only for a limited number of topics. In Turkey, the consul general in Istanbul is predominantly responsible for consular and economic tasks in the nine western provinces. The consul general is not covering issues with the central government and is as such not negotiating treaties and (inter-) national political issues. Internally, within the Dutch diplomatic network itself, the consul general reports to the ambassador. At this moment, the Dutch embassy in Ankara is not lead by an ambassador, but by a “chargé d’affaires”, which is currently Erik Weststrate. Recently, the Turkish and Dutch governments have, however, decided to exchange ambassadors again.

Based on the local needs and opportunities, a consulate (general) can choose to have certain departments or not. In the case of Istanbul, there are the following departments: Consular, Economic, Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency (NFIA), Innovation, Matra & Human Rights, Press & Culture, General Affairs, and (because of the situation in Syria and the Dutch-Syrian relations) a “Syrian” team. Apart from these departments, the Dutch

\(^3\) To specify: the following can be regarded as consular services: issuing travel documents (passports for nationals of the country of origin and visas for citizens from the host country), including emergency documents, formalities in civil status (marriage, divorce, birth, death), personal and family law and the notarial profession, the issuance of various consular certificates, the issuing of driving licenses, identity documents, assistance with transport of mortal remains (laissez-passer).

\(^4\) To specify: economic services entail giving information to companies, encouraging foreign investments, inform about local legislation.
Business Association and Nuffic Neso (the expertise and service center for internationalization of Dutch education) are also housed on the premises of the consulate general. All of this reflects Istanbul’s importance. Not only is Istanbul by far the biggest city of the country (with over 15 million inhabitants, whereas the second biggest city, Ankara has “only” over 4 million inhabitants), it is its economic powerhouse as it is responsible for over 25 percent of the national GDP, and moreover it is also the cultural capital. Because of this, the Innovation department and the Press & Culture department are not located in Ankara, but rather in Istanbul. The relative importance of Istanbul has also resulted in a close collaboration between the embassy in Ankara and the consulate general in Istanbul regarding the public diplomacy strategy, on which I will elaborate further on.

The fact that Istanbul is relatively important within the Turkish context has resulted in a relatively “big” consulate general, with over sixty employees. It should be mentioned that this relatively “big” consulate general is likewise the result of the strong cultural Dutch-Turkish ties (seeing that the Netherlands has around 400.000 inhabitants with connections to Turkey) and the strong Dutch-Turkish economic ties, as well as Turkey’s important role in the field of migration (especially since 2011, with the start of the Syrian civil war and the “deal” that was made between the EU and Turkey, whereby Turkey has become responsible for sheltering Syrian refugees and in return receives funds from the EU).

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Activities

Matra & Human Right’s

To provide insight and context regarding my activities for the consulate general in the field of Matra & Human Right’s, I will first give some background information regarding these programs.

Matra, as has been mentioned in the introduction, is an abbreviation of “Maatschappelijke” (Social) “Transformatie” (Transformation) and is a program of the Dutch government to support social changes in countries neighboring the European Union and especially those with EU accession prospects. In Turkey, the Matra program has been active since 2000. Turkish civil society organizations, non-profit educational institutions, lower governments and semi-governmental organizations can submit proposals to get (financial) support from the Matra fund for their work (which totals 750.000 euro in 2018 for the missions in Ankara and Istanbul combined). In Turkey, the following priority areas have been identified regarding the Matra fund: legislation and law; governance, public order and police; human rights; and minorities. The idea is that activities in these fields will contribute to the development of an open, pluralist and democratic society in Turkey and that bilateral relations between Turkey and the Netherlands improve.

Generally, the budget of a project must range between 25.000 and 300.000 euro, but in practice, most activities have an average budget of 100.000 euro. Organizations are free to implement projects on their own, but the consulate general (or the embassy in Ankara, depending on the geographical location of the project) monitor the project and an organization must hand in a final narrative report and a final budget report within two months after the project has finished. The mission will then evaluate the project and depending on this a final payment will be transferred to the organization (usually, at the start of a project, the implementing organization receives 80% of the requested funds, the remaining 20% - or less depending on the actual spending – is paid after evaluation has taken place).

In addition to the Matra-program, there is also a Human Rights Fund (which totals 500.000 euro in 2018 for the missions in Ankara and Istanbul combined). Local NGOs, non-profit educational institutions, lower governments and semi-governmental organizations in Turkey can apply for this fund. With this fund, the emphasis lies on protecting human rights defenders, promoting equal rights for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people (LGBT), and promoting and establishing equal rights for women. Two other priority areas are freedom of expression and freedom of religion and belief.

Before moving on to my work regarding the Matra- and Human Rights programs, it is worthwhile to give some background information regarding the situation in Turkey. Back in 2000, when the Matra fund was established in Turkey, European countries were relatively optimistic regarding the situation in Turkey and how it was progressively moving towards becoming a serious candidate for EU-membership. It must be said, from 2000 onwards, the situation regarding freedom of expression, freedom of religion and the possibility to form

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organizations reached levels that Turkey had not seen since the 1980s (in 1980, with the military coup, freedom was severely curtailed). However, in the past ten years, the situation has rapidly changed in a negative way and especially since the Gezi protests of 2013 and the coup attempt of July 2016. In the aftermath of the coup attempt, the government declared a state of emergency, jailed thousands of soldiers and embarked on a wholesale purge of public officials, police, teachers, judges, and prosecutors. Most of those jailed, dismissed, or suspended were accused of being followers of the US-based cleric Fethullah Gülen who is regarded to be the mastermind behind the coup attempt.

The effects of the purge can be seen in the “Global State of Democracy Indices” from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), which is an intergovernmental organization based in Stockholm that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. Note that civil society participation is picking up again after 2013 (see the graph on the next page), although it should be mentioned that this has predominantly been caused by the Syrian civil war, which required the setting-up of new (foreign) organizations to cope with the great influx of refugees. Freedom of expression has in fact further declined. Although the state of emergency (which has been in place ever since July 2016) got recently abolished, it is questionable whether things will normalize in the field of freedom of expression and human rights. With the new executive presidency, having come into effect since July of this year, the president has similar powers as the state of emergency provided.

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7 At least 2,200 judges and prosecutors were jailed pending investigation and 3,400 were permanently dismissed. As such, over one-fifth of Turkey’s judiciary has been removed. Over 100,000 public officials and civil servants have been dismissed or suspended. These include around 28,000 teachers alleged to be Gülen supporters and labelled by the government to be part of a terrorist organization. The government also closed over 160 media outlets. The number of journalists in detention was 144 by mid-November 2016, making Turkey the number one country in the world for jailing journalists. Using state of emergency powers, in November 2016 the government suspended the activities of 370 nongovernmental associations, among them a children’s rights group, three lawyers’ associations with a human rights focus, and women’s rights and humanitarian organizations in the southeast. See: Human Rights Watch, “Turkey: Events of 2016”, [https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/turkey](https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/turkey), (accessed: 19-07-2018).

Especially after 2016, the changes regarding the freedom of expression and the forming of organizations in Turkey have had a great impact on the Matra- and Human Rights programs as well. Whereas there were 161 applications for the Matra- and Human Rights funds for 2017, the embassy and the consulate general received only 51 applications for 2018, which is
a dramatic decrease (it must be mentioned that this cannot only be attributed to the state of civil society in Turkey, the worsening Turkish-Dutch relations may also play a role). To cope with the current situation, projects have become less “activist” and are, as such, not so much about trying to persuade people that – for instance – women and the LGBTI community should have equal rights, but rather focus on the groups themselves and try to support them (for instance through psychological council). Caution is advised, especially because the Turkish government regards work in this field as “intervening in Turkish matters” and as a way of the “West” to undermine Turkish (family) life. Within this climate, some NGOs have a hard time keeping their heads above the water (especially LGBTI organizations. In Ankara, for instance, all LGBTI events have been banned by the governor in 2017 to “protect public security”) and rely on the financial support of the Dutch government (and/or other countries of foreign associations/organizations). In this case, it becomes less important what kind of project the organization wants to implement, rather they receive funds from the Matra- or Human Rights fund to keep them from going under, this kind of funding is also called “core funding”. With this context in mind, the following main workflows as part of the Matra- and Human Rights work can be named: (application of) new projects, monitoring ongoing projects, evaluating finished projects, organizing related events, monitoring court cases. I will elaborate on these.

This year, Turkish civil society, non-profit educational institutions, lower governments and semi-governmental organizations had until January 7th to submit new proposals to get support for their work from the Matra- or Human Rights fund. As mentioned, a total of 51 organizations eventually applied and after a first selection, 21 applications were discussed on February 7th and 9th by the Matra- and Human Rights teams of Ankara and Istanbul. Organizations have to make use of a standard template for their proposal and for their budget. Based on these documents, summaries are written to allow every one of the Matra- and Human Rights teams to understand the proposed projects as quickly as possible and to come to verdicts in an efficient way. I wrote five of these summaries, which consist of: the requested budget, the duration of the project, the theme the project is addressing (e.g. women’s rights, LGBTI rights, freedom of expression, etc.), the location(s) where the project will take place, the main goal of the project (what issues(s) is it trying to address?), the activities that will be organized as part of this, an explanation of how these activities will improve the issue the project is addressing, an explanation of how the organization will measure the improvements, an explanation of how the project is sustainable (the Matra- and Human Rights funds are explicitly not meant for standalone one-time activities, but rather are meant to contribute to the establishment of something permanent like: a hotline for psychological consultation, an archive, a media production, an organization, etc.), our remarks regarding the project (questions, doubts, etc.). The main points that were then discussed during the meetings of February 7th and 9th are: in its current form, can the project (and its activities) be implemented? Is the periodization realistic? Is the project too ambitious or perhaps too limited in its approach? Is it sustainable? Is the budget realistic and for what kind of items is the organization asking budget? (for instance: the fund is not meant for purchasing things like laptops, camera’s, etc.). Apart from that, the missions in Ankara and Istanbul are looking to support a broad and balanced range of themes (i.e. they want to avoid supporting an unbalanced number of projects that are all about one kind of theme, such as
women’s rights) and want to cover different regions in Turkey. Based on this, twelve projects were eventually chosen by the missions in Ankara and Istanbul, of which four projects are managed by the consulate general in Istanbul (which is based on the location of the organizations and their projects). The themes covered through these twelve projects are: freedom of expression and internet freedom; LGBTI rights; women’s rights; human rights; rule of law, including accountability/combating impunity; support to human rights activists; corporate social responsibility; minorities.

After identifying which projects will be supported based on the applications of January 2018, the selected organizations are contacted and asked to make certain revisions regarding the project (and its activities) and/or the budget. On March 21st, for instance, Leyla, me and Sylvia (the “policy officer”, or head, of the Matra- and Human Rights department in Istanbul) met with Delal Dink, who is the president of the Hrant Dink Foundation. After the organizations, have made revisions in their project proposal and budget, everything is again evaluated and check to see whether everything is in order, if this is the case, a so-called “memo” and a contract are drafted. During my time as an intern, I have been working on the memos of three of the four projects. A memo is meant to administratively process a project application and is the accountability of the mission to The Hague. As such, a memo is an internal document that is not shared with the implementing organization. Not only does the memo summarize the goal(s) of the project and mention the planned activities, it also states which risks relate to the project, as well as the implementing organization. In Turkey, general risks for every project have been the state of emergency and corruption. Regarding the organization, we take into consideration whether previous projects have been done in cooperation with the Dutch missions (do we have positive experiences?) and we also look at the internal integrity of the organization (what measures are taken to prevent corruption, sexual harassment, etc.).

The memo’s that I wrote were always checked by Leyla, who would then provide me with feedback. Once the memos were in order, I would draft the concept contract and, together with the project application and proposed budget, I would then send these four documents to the regional office in Prague, where everything is checked again and put into the system. If everything is in order, the contract can be signed by the consulate general and the implementing organization. This gives the green light to the organization to start with the project.

Seeing that projects have different durations (usually between one and two years, but sometimes the organization asks for an extension), there were several projects still ongoing during my internship. As a way of monitoring a project, the Dutch missions usually visit one, or several, activities that are organized by an implementing organization. I personally visited Kadir Has University in Istanbul on April 11th to attend their “roundtable session on civil

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9 Of the total budget of 1.250.000 euro (750.000 euro from the Matra-fund and 500.000 from the Human Rights fund), 539.000 euro is reserved for the first instalments of the twelve projects, 300.000 euro is reserved to pro-actively identify project partners who work on key human rights issues (as such, apart from the fact that organizations can apply for funds, Ankara and Istanbul are also maintaining a “flexible” fund that can be used for more ad hoc projects), such as freedom of expression and support for human rights defenders. The rest of the budget is used for the second instalments of ongoing projects.

10 Hrant Dink is an organization founded in 2007 which promotes pluralistic discourse and tries to preserve the history of Turkish minorities - especially that of Armenians.
society: strengthening and youth empowerment”. Kadir Has University, which’ “Center for International and European Studies” (CIES) is implementing a project with funds from the Human Rights fund, is trying to improve the state of civil society in Turkey. For the roundtable session, an international group of people, who are active within NGOs, came together to discuss the current state of civil society in Turkey and to discuss ways to strengthen civil society and get more young people involved. As part of the monitoring, what is evaluated is: the general organization of the activity, attendance, participation of attendees and the (concrete) results of the activity (and are these sustainable)? For me, attending this session has not only given my insight in how these kinds of activities are and how they should be monitored, but it also provided me with valuable information (e.g. regarding civil society in Turkey) and interesting contacts (e.g. Brechtje Kemp of International IDEA). Afterwards, I wrote a short report which can be used for the final report and final evaluation at the end of the project. Apart from attending this activity, I have been present at several other activities that were organized by other organizations as well. Often, an organization likes to kick-off a project by inviting the consul general who will then give a speech. In these cases, Leyla and I provided the consul general with background information regarding the project, and on several occasions, I accompanied him (for instance on June 7 at the opening event for the Matra project “Enhancing Women’s Leadership Trajectories Through Female Role Models”, by KOC-KAM).

Apart from monitoring ongoing projects, it is also possible that an organization finds out – as the project is going on – that they require more funds or more time to implement the project successfully. Also, in case of changes in the budget items, the organization is required to ask for permission. In all these cases, the consulate general evaluates the request and contacts the organization. In some cases, (for instance when the organization asks for more funds), an amendment must be written based on the request of the organization. In this document, it is explained why the organization needs additional funds. During my time as intern, such amendment documents did not have to be drafted. Usually, changes in the budget items would suffice and would allow the organization to continue with their work on the project.

After a project has finished, an organization is required to hand in a “final narrative report” and a “final financial report”. In these reports, the organization reflects on the project and gives information regarding the success, limited success, or failure of the activities that were planned as part of the project. Also, the organization accounts for the amount of money that has been spent at the end of the project. This allows the consulate general to determine whether the organization will receive a final payment, or whether it will receive no further funds, or even should pay the consulate general some of the funds back (for instance because the first payment was higher than what eventually was spent on the project). Based on a standard format, that is provided by the regional office in Prague, the project is evaluated by answering questions such as: have there been policy bottlenecks/risks? Have there been management bottlenecks/risks? If so, have these bottlenecks/risks been addressed adequately? Have the intended objectives of the project been achieved? Is the activity sufficiently sustainable? Are the main differences (>10% per budget item) between realization and budget

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11 This report is attached as Annex 1.
sufficiently explained? In case of shifts in budget items compared to the original budget: have these been requested and approved earlier? Based on the handed in final narrative report, the final financial report, the monitoring reports, the original application documents and earlier correspondence, these questions are answered and together determine whether the reports can be approved and what the overall conclusion is. It is also common that the handed-in reports spark questions and in this case, the organization is asked to clarify. The final report is rounded off with a short summary of how much the organization has spent at the end of the project, how much they have received from the fund through earlier payment(s) and as such (if the end-result is approved) what the remaining amount is that the organization will receive (if they indeed still need to receive a last payment). After this has been done, a closing letter is drafted that is sent to the organization after everything is approved.

During my internship, I wrote five final reports, which were then checked by Leyla, who would then provide feedback and/or would make additions. Likewise, I wrote five closing letters. Together with the final narrative report, the final budget report and the closing letter, the final report was then sent by me to the regional office in Prague. The regional office would double-check everything and, if everything were to be in order, would arrange the final payment to the organization. After receiving a green light from them, I would send the closing letter and make sure that all the above-mentioned documents were archived. There are two “systems” for the foreign ministry in which you must archive all the necessary documents: 24/7 Plaza, which is a cloud-based, SharePoint platform, and Sophia, which is a pure archive system.

In practice, seeing the different start dates and durations of projects, I would be writing a memo the one day and a final report on the other. Generally, Matra- and Human Rights work was as such very diverse and it could be challenging to keep a good overview of all the ongoing projects. I think I made a valuable contribution to improving the overview during my internship by setting up an administrative system for the Matra- and Human Rights projects in 24/7 Plaza. 24/7 Plaza is relatively new within the ministry and during the first month of my internship, we were visited by two consultants who explained the workings of this SharePoint-based platform. From a previous job, I was already familiar with SharePoint and combined with the trainings we received, I managed to set up an administrative system in 24/7 Plaza for the Matra- and Human Rights projects. The overview I created allows users to see ongoing and old projects all on one page, together with the most important information regarding the projects (start- and end date, budget, name of the organization, name of the project, etc.). This overview can be updated continuously and to make sure this is the case, I have included a full explanation of the workings in my internship transfer document (“stageoverdracht”). For me, getting the 24/7 Plaza training and working on this overview has had the additional benefit that I have improved my SharePoint skills. Seeing that SharePoint is being used by many organizations, I regard this as valuable to my professional development as well.

During my internship, I also organized several events, including for the Matra- and Human Rights department, which I did together with Leyla. The most significant event, in this regard to mention, has been the Idahot (International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia) event on May 17th. We organized this event together with the consulate general of Sweden and LGBTI organization SPoD (which we also support through the Matra
program), with which we had meetings on April 19th and May 3rd to discuss the program and details. For this event, we invited a Swedish and Dutch LGBTI activist for a panel discussion together with a member of SPoD to share experiences regarding LGBTI activism. Organizing an event is a process that goes from a to z, so not only do you discuss the program and content, but you also work on the list of invitees, create and send out the invitations, keep track of RSVP’s, make sure food and drinks and the general setting are taken care of, receive guests, make photos, publish a Facebook-post afterwards (this is done afterwards because of security risks) and arrange that security wise and financially everything is (administratively) taken care of. As such, there is a broad range of things that organizing an event helps you improve your skills and competences with. Apart from that, events of the consulate general have also always been very enjoyable, informative and a good way to meet new people.

Last, but not least, on June 8th I attended a court hearing regarding the court case against Selahattin Demirtaş (who is a Turkish-Kurdish politician for HDP and who has been in jail since November 2016 on charges of spreading terrorist propaganda). Attending court cases like these is something common amongst several consulates general in Istanbul and is a way of monitoring the Turkish judicial system and keeping track of certain court cases. It is also common that the European Commission sends someone to observe court cases like these. In this case, it was expected that the court would come with a final ruling in the case against Demirtaş, which was reason enough for The Hague to have someone attend on behalf of the Dutch government. Together with Andrea Karlsson, of the Swedish consulate general, I attended this short court hearing, which resulted in a postponement of the ruling until September 7th. Afterwards, I wrote a short report to inform the embassy in Ankara and The Hague. For them, it is not only good to know what the outcome of a case hearing has been (in general, they can also get this information from the news), but also how the general context has been (how are the judges behaving? How is the atmosphere inside the courtroom and outside the courtroom? Etc.). I have included the (Dutch) report that I wrote as annex 2.

Public diplomacy & Communication

As I will discuss my work regarding the public diplomacy strategy, I want to, for purposes of clarity, shortly elaborate on what “public diplomacy” entails and how it is defined by the Dutch ministry of foreign affairs.

Although there are many definitions and descriptions of public diplomacy, it is generally regarded as an instrument for strategic policy communications that enables a country to strengthen its image (i.e. reputation) and win the trust of target groups by entering into partnerships and dialogue with non-official contacts abroad who can influence decision-making in policy areas relevant to the country. Public diplomacy also aims to present an image of the country to foreign audiences that is both realistic and as favorable as possible. Unlike “traditional” diplomacy, which focuses on government-government relations, public diplomacy (the name already gives it away) specifically focusses on everything beside the government of a country, but rather wants to reach out to the “public”; being it academics, NGOs, companies, artists, etc. The general idea is that, by creating a context that is favorable towards the country, the government as such will also become (more) favorable towards the
country. Apart from that, a strong reputation creates fruitful soil for political and economic opportunities.

Limited budget and capacity at the Dutch missions means that not all bases can be covered. As such, it is important to identify niches, or a limited number of themes, for showcasing the Netherlands’ strengths. Dutch reputation can be strengthened by tailoring communications to the above-mentioned target groups and by focusing on dialogue and the Dutch corporate message. Following up initial contact consistently, as well as in the long term, translates into contracts for businesses and transferring of knowledge and expertise to the host country. It also ensures that the Netherlands is seen as a constructive partner in a range of areas.

Regarding my activities in the field of public diplomacy, it must be said that the above-mentioned definition was not so clear to me when I just started working at the consulate general. Rather, the first thing I did was getting to know what public diplomacy exactly entails and what vision the consulate general had in this regard. As such, I had several talks with both the consul general, Bart van Bolhuis, and Quirine van der Hoeven (head of the culture and press department). I also read up on public diplomacy in general and on Dutch public diplomacy specifically (for instance by reading the public diplomacy strategies of the Dutch missions in Tunisia, Italy and the United States). Moreover, the former communication and public diplomacy intern had already started working on the strategy for the consulate general in Istanbul, so this was an important document for me too. It was already clear that the consulate’s strategy would be to focus on the theme of “livable cities”, for which there are several reasons. First, the theme of livable cities can be seen as valuable because of the relative high urbanization rate in Turkey (74.4% in 2017), the importance of cities regarding Turkey’s GDP (e.g. Istanbul is responsible for over 25% of the national GDP), the significant share of relatively big cities in the country (around 8 cities have a population of over 1 million people), and the growing importance of cities in the near future. Second, it can be argued that the Netherlands has plenty to offer to make cities more livable. After all, as a country that urbanized early on, the Netherlands has found creative ways to manage complex urban situations. Thus, within the consulate general and the embassy, it is felt that, with the theme of livable cities, a unique contribution can be made, and a distinguishing story can be told that is relevant to Turkey. More so because what the Netherlands has to offer in this field can be very well connected with the three Dutch “core values” that have been defined by the foreign ministry, namely that the Netherlands is open, connective and inventive. In Turkey, the mission in Istanbul and the mission in Ankara will aim to position the Netherlands as a trading nation that continues to blossom from a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, and that is rooted in the strong beliefs of security, freedom and justice.

Having read up on public diplomacy, I then had to make myself familiar with the concept of the “livable city” and what it exactly entails. Again, I did this by making use of literature and by talking with colleagues at the consulate general (in this case, specifically with Rory Nuijens and Yavuz Yasar of the innovation department, and my fellow interns Tomas van Gorp, also of the innovation department, and Orkide Kara from the economic department, but also in broader settings through public diplomacy meetings with all the departments, for instance on March 30th). To make the concept of livable cities more concrete (which is necessary, seeing that the public diplomacy strategy needs to be clear for all colleagues within the consulate general, as only then will they be able to implement it in their work and spread the messages that are connected with it), it can be divided into three subthemes, a livable city is: a smart and green city,13 a resilient city,14 and an open and

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13 Two focus points for making a city smarter and greener are “infrastructure” (e.g. self-driving vehicles) and the “environment” (e.g. climate neutral living), whereby it should be noted that to be “smart” and “green” is not just about making use of new, innovative developments, technologies or existing know-how. Rather, a truly smart and green city makes use of the growing potential of “collaborative technologies”, which enable greater collaboration between citizens, city governments, companies, NGOs, universities and innovation centers.

14 Generally, a resilient city is one that can deal with physical, social and economic challenges. If we are looking for a definition, “resilient” can be explained as: “possessing inner strength and resolve”. A resilient city is one that can deal with future shifts, shocks and stresses such as climate change, depleted oil- and fuel reserves, and
Although there are no clear-cut divisions between these three (e.g. a smart city is “smart” by making use of the “creativity” of its inhabitants), it can be argued that they all have their specific focuses and, as such, are useful to make the concept of livable cities more concrete. Also, making this subdivision and writing about these subthemes allowed me to better grasp the concept of livable cities and as such allowed me to work on the public diplomacy strategy. Apart from reading and talking about these subjects, the public diplomacy guide of the ministry of foreign affairs has also been very useful. Apart from writing the strategy, I have created several visuals through Adobe Photoshop as a way to make things more clear. Also, they can be handy tools for colleagues who can make use of them during presentations or workshops. I have included some of these visuals in annex 3.

Seeing that the consulate general in Istanbul will focus specifically on the theme of livable cities, the strategy that I wrote is especially meant for this mission. The embassy in Ankara will, apart from livable cities, also focus on two other core themes, namely: promoting openness, inventiveness and inclusiveness among a diverse audience, and: sustainable solutions to agricultural challenges. Together, these three core themes make up the complete public diplomacy strategy of the Netherlands for the whole of Turkey. Apart from the strategy that I wrote regarding livable cities, I also worked together with Cees van Beek (who works on public diplomacy, culture and human rights at the embassy in Ankara) on this overarching public diplomacy strategy document.

Finishing the public diplomacy strategy (which will be used up and until 2021) has allowed for the implementation of public diplomacy projects along the line of the strategy, and as such, this has been the next step in my work. With the strategy finished, Quirine and I organized a meeting with all the departments on April 20th to discuss possible projects to make use of the public diplomacy budget that is available to the missions in Turkey (which comes down to a total of 45,000 euro). The different departments of the consulate were invited to come up with their suggestions for public diplomacy projects and it has been up to the consul general and Quirine van der Hoeven to make a selection. Seeing that there were plenty of good ideas and the fact that the budget of 45,000 euro is meant for both Ankara and Istanbul, it became clear that the ambitions were bigger than the budget. As such, together with Cees van Beek and Quirine van der Hoeven, I have written a request for a so-called “top-

other crises. As such, the focus within the subtheme of the resilient city is on the “economy” (e.g. a resilient city has a diversified economy and as such does not rely on just one kind of industry), on “governance” (e.g. a resilient city has a transparent government and clear leadership), on “society” (e.g. a resilient city has healthy and involved citizens) and on the “environment” (e.g. a resilient city has adequate resources and an adequate infrastructure).

The focus within the subtheme of the open and creative city is on “culture” and “innovation”, whereby the philosophy behind the concept is that there is always more creative potential in one place. To make use of this potential, a city requires both “hard” infrastructure (e.g. buildings, roads or sewage) and “soft” infrastructure, which includes a city's mindset, how it approaches opportunities and problems, its atmosphere and incentives and regulatory regime. Four reasons can be named for why it is important that a city is open and creative: culture (e.g. art, cultural heritage) and creative industries contribute to the attractiveness of a city, making it a nicer place to live; culture helps bring people together, can improve mutual understanding and facilitates inter-communal dialogue and, as such, can help overcome existing boundaries within a society; openness and creativeness lead to a stronger, more connected and resilient community, creates a more inclusive nightlife and improves safety and reduces crime; culture and creativity contribute to higher economic growth rates and can tackle urban design challenges/issues.

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15 The focus within the subtheme of the open and creative city is on “culture” and “innovation”, whereby the philosophy behind the concept is that there is always more creative potential in one place. To make use of this potential, a city requires both “hard” infrastructure (e.g. buildings, roads or sewage) and “soft” infrastructure, which includes a city's mindset, how it approaches opportunities and problems, its atmosphere and incentives and regulatory regime. Four reasons can be named for why it is important that a city is open and creative: culture (e.g. art, cultural heritage) and creative industries contribute to the attractiveness of a city, making it a nicer place to live; culture helps bring people together, can improve mutual understanding and facilitates inter-communal dialogue and, as such, can help overcome existing boundaries within a society; openness and creativeness lead to a stronger, more connected and resilient community, creates a more inclusive nightlife and improves safety and reduces crime; culture and creativity contribute to higher economic growth rates and can tackle urban design challenges/issues.
up”, whereby, based on the proposed projects and our strategy, we have applied for additional funds from The Hague. This request is currently being reviewed.

Apart from that, there was, as of yet, no standard working method for how to come up with new public diplomacy projects and implementing them if they would get approved. As such, based on working methods that are being used by the Matra- and Human Rights department and the culture department, I wrote a working method that gives detailed information regarding the administrative process. As is the case within Matra- and Human Rights projects, proposals can be made for new public diplomacy projects at the beginning of the year so as to allow for a balanced and well thought-out program throughout the year (only, in this case the proposals will come from the departments within the consulate general, rather than from external parties) and Quirine van der Hoeven and the consul general will make the selection. For every approved proposal, a memo must be written, accompanied with a general budget. These documents will then have to be sent to the regional office in Prague in order to complete the administrative process and allow for payments. After a project has finished, it will be evaluated.

As I had done for the Matra- and Human Rights department, I created a SharePoint platform on 24/7 Plaza, which allows colleagues to register new public diplomacy projects and, in this way, to see all (ongoing) projects in one clear overview. This makes it easier to keep track of what public diplomacy projects there are, how much of the budget is being used, what themes and targets groups are focused on, etc. At the same time, this SharePoint platform allows colleagues to save all documents that are related to a project to the specific project page. Archival of the projects is, as such, guaranteed.

As has been the case with my Matra- and Human Rights work, there have also been several meetings (to get an idea of the meetings I had, see annex 4) and events (for a complete list of the events I organized, or helped to organize, see annex 5) that are connected with public diplomacy. To name a few: on June 6th, I attended the first session of one of the public diplomacy projects, called “Dutch Sessions”, which is about inviting Dutch experts to Turkey to talk about their field of expertise. The general idea is to promote Dutch know-how and to create connections between Dutch companies and knowledge institutions with Turkish ones. Also, on June 12th, I welcomed two Turkish solar panel companies, which visited the consulate general to see the potential to produce solar energy. Improving the sustainability of the consulate is also one of the public diplomacy projects, and will be a focus point for the coming years, whereby the consulate should be a showcase for what is possible in this regard. Connected with this, we met with a delegation of the French consulate general on June 21th, as they are also considering possibilities for making their buildings more sustainable. Seeing that they are neighboring the Dutch consulate general, we are looking into ways of working together for the coming years and to actively work on what has been agreed upon in the Paris Agreement of 2015.

Apart from public diplomacy, I should mention that I have also been involved in communication work during my internship (which is connected with public diplomacy, but rather than focusing on the long-term, is much more short term based). Although there was a separate communication’s intern who was responsible for maintaining the social media channels, I nonetheless wrote several posts for Facebook and Twitter. More so, because the communication intern had to quit her internship due to personal circumstances. Apart from
writing posts for Facebook and Twitter, I also became responsible for the weekly communication meetings (in which possible subjects for posts are discussed with the different departments of the consulate general) and the creation of posters (at the gate of the consulate general, there is a frame that can hold a poster through which the consulate tries to convey several messages). Again, through my communication work, I created several visuals in Photoshop and as such improved my skills in this regard.

Seeing that my overall workload was already high, communication work has not been a focus point during my internship, but has rather been something that I tried to do as good as possible in combination with my other work. In the end, I am nonetheless satisfied with my work in this regard and especially regarding a new Facebook series that I started called “ThrowbackThursday” (which is a common hashtag on social media). The idea is to post a historical story on our Facebook page on every Thursday. My post about the Dutch village of “Turkeye” (in Zeeland), which was named as such during the Eighty Years War as a way to thank the Ottomans for their support, remains the best performing post of the consulate general in 2018, having reached over 35,000 Facebook users and receiving over 670 likes.
Sport

Although my work in the field of sport has been more something of an “extra”, it is nonetheless worthwhile to mention what it is that I have exactly been doing in this regard. The initiative to do more with sports has been taken by the consul general, who has recognized the role sports can play in public diplomacy in general and in improving relations and creating connections specifically. At the same time, sport – of course – is part of a healthy lifestyle and contributes to both physical and mental fitness.

My work can be split up in two main categories: organizing or participating in sport events on the one side and improving sport connections on the other. Regarding the latter, I have mapped out what Dutch sportsmen and women are active in Turkey (and specifically in Istanbul) and what sports events/matches are attended by Dutch athletes. Especially in the field of football there is a significant Dutch presence in Turkey, with Eljero Elia playing at Beşiktaş (and being one of the best players of this Istanbul-based top club), Jeremain Lens, Ryan Babel and Oğuzhan Özyakup playing at Beşiktaş, Vincent Janssen playing at Fenerbahçe (and Phillip Cocu being the new coach of this club), and Garry Rodríguez and Ryan Donk playing at Galatasaray. The Dutch consulate general tries to stay connected with all these players, and as such I have had a meeting with Vincent Janssen and met with Jeremain Lens and Ryan Donk. I have also been present at the press presentation of Phillip Cocu and arranged that the consul general and five other colleagues could attend the friendly match between Fenerbahçe and Feyenoord on July 21st, whereby the consul general afterwards met with Cocu.

Organizing sport events likewise fits well within the public diplomacy strategy of the consulate general as it promotes healthy living and can help create new connections and contacts. As such, we strengthened our contact with Istanbul-based run group Rundamental (with which I have been running on a weekly basis outside of work too) and have decided to start a run from the consulate general every two months. This happened for the first time on April 19th. On this day, around 80 people (who had signed up through Rundamental’s social media channels) gathered at the consulate general, did their warming up and started their 8-kilometer run through the old part of Istanbul. All runners were welcomed by the consul general and received orange Dopper-bottles with the Holland logo on it (usually, disposable bottles of water are used, but of course, as part of the public diplomacy strategy, the consulate general wants to promote something more sustainable). Reactions of the participating runners were very positive and in general people were very surprised that something like this was possible at a consulate general. On July 12th, the second run from the consulate general was organized by me in cooperation with Rundamental and additionally, throughout July and August, several yoga sessions in cooperation with Rundamental will be organized in the garden of the consulate general as well.

Apart from organizing events, the consulate general also wants to be involved in events that allow Dutch companies and knowledge institutions to show what they can offer. As such, the consul general and I had a meeting with event organizing company Show Fuarcilik, which, for the first time, is organizing a football exhibition in Istanbul between 27 and 30 September. After we had a clearer picture of what the exhibition would exactly be about and could possibly offer, we contacted Dutch sports organizations (such as KNVB and...
the Cruyff Foundation) to inform them about the exhibition and ask whether they would be interested to participate. Another event that the consulate general is involved in is the cycling trip from Istanbul to The Hague which is organized by Barricade Film Festival as a way to raise awareness regarding the situation people with a disability are in. Seeing that the group will cycle through eleven countries, they asked for our help to get into contact with governments of these countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France, Luxemburg, Belgium, the Netherlands) and with the Dutch embassies of these countries. After informing the Dutch embassies of these countries, some decided to come up with public diplomacy activities around the period that the group would cycle through “their” countries. Also, we hosted Barricade Film Festival and the group of cyclists at the consulate general on July 15th and me, the consul general and two others joined the group on their first stage from the consulate general to Büyükçekmece (around 60 kilometers of cycling). Again, seeing that the Netherlands is a major player in the cycling industry and the fact that the Netherlands is the number one cycling country in the world, this event fits well in the public diplomacy strategy.
Evaluation and conclusion

As the above-mentioned will have illustrated, my work at the consulate general has been very diverse. Because I have been working on public diplomacy, Matra and Human Rights and sports (and to some extent on communication work), I have learned a lot and gained a lot of experience in many fields. Working for two different departments (Press and Cultural Affairs on the one side and Matra and Human Rights on the other) has also resulted in the fact that I met with a broad range of people and got to work together with basically all my colleagues. As such, I was introduced to all different sorts of work and got a good overview of what is going on within a consulate general.

Obviously, working on such a broad range of things can be challenging: at the start of my internship I had to find my way with the different kinds of work and often had to manage them at the same time. In practice, it was hard to fully focus on one kind of job, rather it has been much more common that different kinds of work were mixed up in the course of a day. Seeing that I was just getting to know the different workflows, it was relatively hard to handle them all. More so because it required more energy from me to adjust to my new surroundings than I had expected in advance. Although Istanbul is very much like any other big European city, I nonetheless had to find my way. Combined, the work load at times tended to be rather challenging and in some cases prioritizing could be hard (for instance when there was a communication deadline, but also a human rights deadline on the same day). The fact that the communication intern had to quit her internship early meant that I also became responsible for the largest share of the communication work, which further increased my workload.

During my internship, I discussed this with both Quirine and Leyla and they have been very helpful and were always looking out for me. As such, we have always been able to cope with the workload in a pragmatic way. Dealing with this has also been a good learning experience for me. Previously, I would feel like I should be able to cope with everything and, as such, I used to find it hard to say “no” (also because I wanted to get the most out of my internship and therefore wanted to do as much as possible). More so because I can be rather perfectionistic and prefer to do everything myself. During my internship, I learned that it is sometimes better to be clear and indicate that a certain job cannot be done by me within the stated amount of time. This also showed me that it is the more important to make things in your work concrete and to come up with a clear timeline and deadline is essential to do this. I should mention that, although my workload increased towards the end (with the communication intern leaving early), having become familiar with the different workflows and ways of working, I became better at managing my work. This also increased my work pleasure which, it should be noted, has always been high at the consulate general.

From the start, colleagues have been friendly and helpful and many of them have never made me (or any of the other interns for that matter) feel like an intern, but more like a fellow colleague. This was not only showed in behavior, but also in action, as I have been trusted with a broad range of work, such as the administrative processes that are going on at a consulate general and within the ministry of foreign affairs (such as writing memo’s, drafting contracts, writing a public diplomacy strategy), organizing events and meetings (e.g. Idahot, running from the consulate general, communication meetings), creating new administrative platforms (using Microsoft SharePoint), creating posters and visuals (using Adobe Photoshop)
and selecting, monitoring and evaluating projects for the Matra and Human Rights program. When I started in January, diplomacy and public diplomacy were still rather abstract to me. The fact that Quirine fully involved me and helped me with writing the public diplomacy strategy has made things concrete and clear to me. Now that there is a strategy, things have come more to “life” and it is exciting that the consulate general can now go on with the implementation of a number of interesting public diplomacy projects. The fact that I was completely involved and trusted, also meant that I got to meet with a broad range of people, ranging from the French consul general to Fenerbahçe player Vincent Janssen, and from LGBTI activist Mustafa Sariyilmaz to journalist Lucas Waagmeester.

Writing is an important part of the work at the consulate general (being it memo’s, the public diplomacy strategy, or to evaluate a Matra and Human Rights project) and both my history bachelor and my middle eastern studies master have, as such, been of great importance. In both programs, I have been trained to think in a critical and analytical way and to then put my thoughts into words on paper. Apart from that, my master’s program has been very useful as it has provided me with a sufficient amount of information to properly understand the situation in Turkey and the surrounding regions. Obviously, effects of the Syrian civil war can be felt very well in Turkey, as over 3 million Syrian people have taken refuge there. This has also had an impact on the kind of projects that apply for funds from the Matra- and Human Rights programs. Therefore, the context provided during the first semester of my master has been very helpful. Even more so now I will continue working at the consulate general as part of the so-called “Syrian team” (seeing that there is no longer a Dutch embassy in Damascus, there is a temporary office in Istanbul), so I expect to make further use of the knowledge that I gained from the master.

The fact that I will continue working at the consulate general shows how, in my view, I have managed to find my way during my internship. By now, I feel very much at home in Istanbul and I am looking forward to staying there for another year (and maybe longer) and to learn more from working at the consulate general. Also, in the past half year, I learned some basic Turkish and hopefully, I will be able to improve it in the coming months too. Once again, I would like to thank everyone at the consulate general. But also, I would like to thank the University of Groningen for having given me the opportunity to do an internship abroad. Both on a personal and professional level, the past six months have been of great value to me and I feel confident that it has, and will, contribute to my future development and career.
Literature


Sources


Internet sources


Annexes

Annex 1 - Activity report Kadir Has University by Robert Feller

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name:</th>
<th>Striving for good governance: civil society strengthening and youth empowerment.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organization:</td>
<td>Kadir Has University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of the activity:</td>
<td>High level roundtable on the state of the Turkish civil society.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Date of activity:</td>
<td>11-04-2018</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Give a short summary of the activity. What was it about? What was the intended result?</td>
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The activity was a “High level roundtable session” that wanted to address the current situation of the civil society in Turkey. It was intended to encourage a debate on the current needs of CSOs, their strengths, and weaknesses and how they see their role in strengthening democratic life in Turkey and the region. The session also wanted to address how cooperation among stakeholders can be developed/improved. In total, 22 (international) participants (with different backgrounds regarding CSOs, academia, etc.) took part in the discussion: Ustun Erguder (ERI/ERG), Ozge Aktas Mazman (TESEV), Deniz Atac (TEMA), Mustafa Aydin (Kadir Has), Itir Sinem Aykut (KAGIDER), Olivia Baciu (Partners Global), Cansen Basaran Symes (Allianz Turkey), Serdar Dinler (CSR Association of Turkey), Ozgur Gurbuz (independent consultant), Brechtje Kemp (International IDEA), Jouni Nissinen (European Environment Bureau), Guzin Aycan Ozturk (CIES, Kadir Has), Regina Salanova (Anna Lindh Foundation), Felix Schmidt (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung), Sibel Sezer (CIES, Kadir Has), Gulcin Sinav (Friedrich Naumann Stiftung for Freedom), Nurdar Sirman (Istanbul Chamber of Industry), Fikret Toksoz (TESEV), Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (CIES, Kadir Has), Stefanos Vallianatos (Hellenic Foundation for Greece and Anna Lindh Network), Erdem Vardar (YUVA), and Laki Vingas (RUMVADER, association for Rum Foundations).

The roundtable session was meant to come up with concrete answers to three questions/issues:

1. Trust in CSOs in Turkey is low. How can this trust be improved without getting into trouble with the government (seeing the state of emergency, etc.).
2. How can cooperation amongst CSOs in Turkey be improved? Right now, CSOs mostly focus on their own themes without looking at what others are doing.
3. How can civic engagement (particularly from youth) in CSOs be improved?
Evaluation:

Shortly evaluate the activity. Were the intended results achieved? Was the activity the right kind of activity to do this? What were the strong points of the activity? What were the weak points?

Although the session was attended by many experienced and knowledgeable people from different backgrounds, the “concrete actions” that it set out to come up with were hardly formulated. There were multiple reasons for this:

The session was lacking the necessary hard data and clearly formulated definitions. It was stated that there is a general lack of trust in Turkey in CSOs, but the actual data (nor the methodology behind this research) to back this up was not available. As such, it was not clear whether this particular matter should be discussed (after all: if the claim is not correct, there is less urgency to discuss this matter, despite the fact that it is – of course – always worthwhile to see whether the trust in CSOs can be improved). Also, participants had varying views on what entails the “civil society”, or CSOs, or NGOs. When it comes to a subject such as this, it is useful to pose a clear definition beforehand so that everyone knows what to expect and what to discuss. Beside this, some participants felt they were not informed adequately, and therefore did not know what exactly was expected from them and how they could contribute to the discussion. Because of this, some parts of the session became rather anecdotal, whereby participants decided to talk from their own experience. Although this can result in some concrete plans that can be worked out, they mainly remained “just” stories, whereby a clear coherence was lacking. Throughout the session, a clear focus was often lacking and no steps to make the different discussed ideas concrete were undertaken.

As there were over twenty participants there were many people who had something to say. The result was that the session took longer than had been planned. At the same time, the original plan was to pose 5 concrete questions after the first part of the session and to find answers to these. However, due to lack of time, this did not happen. In the future, it would be advisable to choose a different kind of setting whereby a few experts from the field are invited to give a short presentation (e.g. 10 minutes) as a way of sharing their knowledge and to have small group discussions afterwards whereby concrete actions are formulated. Now, with so many people at a big table, there was a lack of focus, as well as the practical issue of people not being able to hear each other properly.

It was meant to discuss how youth can be more involved in CSOs, but again concrete data and information was lacking, so here also the input was mostly anecdotal and based on clichés (e.g. young people are not interested in politics or the world, they don’t like “old-fashioned” ways of organizing). The participants were talking about young people, not with them.

Young people themselves (there were some as part of the team that
organized the event) were not asked about their opinions and views. The most “concrete” ideas were to make CSO work less time consuming, more interesting (through apps, etc.) and to, as CSOs, try keep in contact with them more and involving them. None of these “solutions” look at the broader context and as such remain limited.

It should be noted that, although beforehand it was mentioned that the session would be according to the chatham house rule, participants found out that in practice the discussion was recorded on video. Also, participants were asked to answer some questions in front of a camera before and after the session. Although videos such as these can be very useful, it should be clearly communicated beforehand that this is the plan. More so because participants should know what will eventually happen with these recordings. Of course, it can be interesting to share parts of the discussion and interviews with different stakeholders, but then the participants should give their consent to this.

There were some follow-ups posed at the end of the session:
1. Kadir Has is thinking of creating a handbook, or guide, in which participants of the session can share their best experiences. How do they get people involved? How do they increase trust? How do they improve cooperation among stakeholders?
2. Kadir Has would like to stay into contact with some participants and wants to ask them to become mentors to some students that can sign up for this and as such can get to know more about working at a CSO/NGO. This was not discussed beforehand, so some participants were rather surprised and do not know what is exactly expected from them.

Annex 2 (in Dutch) – Verslag rechtszaak Demirtas (8 juni 2018)

De advocaten van Demirtas hebben om meer tijd gevraagd voor hun laatste verdediging en ook om Demirtas in de gelegenheid te stellen alsnog aanwezig te zijn. Ook verzochten ze om de zaak uit te stellen in verband met de verkiezingen en Demirtas’ rol daarin als presidentskandidaat. De rechters accepteerden Demirtas’ reden om vandaag niet aanwezig te zijn (i.v.m. gezondheid) en om af te zien van een video-verbinding en hebben besloten dat de zaak afgerond wordt op 7 september.

Het was overigens behoorlijk rustig en ordelijk. Er was slechts een fractie van het team van advocate van Demirtas aanwezig (vijf in plaats van de “gebruikelijke” ca. 30). HDP heeft er bewust voor gekozen vrij weinig ruchtbaarheid aan de zaak te geven en heeft om die reden ook niet actief contact gezocht met consulaten, ambassades en journalisten. De partij is van mening dat teveel aandacht voor de zaak van Demirtas op dit moment te veel afleidt van de campagne die het wil voeren (de nadruk ligt dan teveel op Demirtas), zodoende.

Na afloop heb ik nog kort gesproken met een aantal vertegenwoordigers van CG’s/ambassades/HDP, waaronder van Duitsland, Noorwegen, GB en Zweden. Andere CG’s,
HDP en journalisten zijn zich bewust van de “aanwezigheid van NL” bij de zaak van vandaag.

Overigens saillant detail: toen de vertegenwoordigster van het Duitse CG aangaf op zoek te zijn naar de rechtszaal voor de zaak Demirtas, gaf het rechtbank personeel aan niet bekend te zijn met iemand die Demirtas heet en dus niet te kunnen helpen met de exacte locatie. Ook nadat het nummer van de rechtszaal bekend was en zij vroeg waar zij die kon vinden wees het personeel haar in de verkeerde richting. Als ik Andrea (Zweedse CG) mag geloven is dit vrij typisch en “gebruikelijk” en ben je over het algemeen beter af door niet om hulp te vragen.

Annex 3 – Visuals for public diplomacy strategy
Annex 4 – Meetings I had (structural meetings, such as the communication meeting, are not included in this overview):

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<td>9-2-2018</td>
<td>2nd evaluation meeting of Human Rights and Matra projects</td>
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<td>14-2-2018</td>
<td>Discussing the public diplomacy strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-2-2018</td>
<td>Dutch Sessions meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3-2018</td>
<td>International Women’s Day meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-3-2018</td>
<td>Istanbul High School meeting in the context of their 27th Culture Week and possible support from the Dutch consulate general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-3-2018</td>
<td>Kingsday meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-3-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with Istanbul-based rungroup Rundamental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-3-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with NGO Hrant Dink about their new Human Rights project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-3-2018</td>
<td>Discussing the public diplomacy strategy with the different departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-4-2018</td>
<td>Co-design meeting (one of the public diplomacy projects that is about Dutch and Turkish cooperation in several fields)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-4-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with Leyla Barlas-Aslan and Quirine van der Hoeven about my progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-4-2018</td>
<td>Serious gaming meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-4-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with former kick box trainer Can Sahinbas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-4-2018</td>
<td>Idahot meeting at the Swedish consulate general with Andrea Karlsson and Mustafa Sariyilmaz of LGBTI organization SPoD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-4-2018</td>
<td>Public diplomacy meeting to discuss projects with the departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-4-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with Andrew Finkel of NGO P24 Susma with which we had just finished a Human Rights project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-4-2018</td>
<td>Meeting about the Istanbul Pride with the consul general, the Swedish consul general and two members of the Pride committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-5-2018</td>
<td>Meeting about football exhibition “Footbalex’2018 Istanbul” with organizer Show Fuarcilik.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-5-2018</td>
<td>Public diplomacy project meeting with Yavuz Yasar and Rory Nuijens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-6-2018</td>
<td>Dutch Sessions first peer group meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-6-2018</td>
<td>Call with Novusens about their network event at the consulate general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-6-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with the Dutch press that is based in Istanbul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-6-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with Turkish solar panel companies Neoenerji and EMA Solar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-6-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with Huseyin Nacar of Barricade Film Festival regarding their cycling trip from Istanbul to The Hague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-6-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with French delegation regarding improving the sustainability of the French and Dutch consulate general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-7-2018</td>
<td>Design Biennale (which is part of the co-design public diplomacy project) meeting with Deniz Ova of IKSV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-7-2018</td>
<td>Meeting with Leila Kraiem of the French consulate general about improving the sustainability of the French and Dutch consulate general</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annex 5 - Events I organized, or that I helped to organize:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-3-2018</td>
<td>International Women’s Day – movie screening, panel and cocktail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-3-2018</td>
<td>International Women’s Day – self-defense course for women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-3-2018</td>
<td>International Women’s Day – network event with Funda Mujde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-4-2018</td>
<td>Running from the consulate general (together with Istanbul-based rungroup Rundamental)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-4-2018</td>
<td>Kingsday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5-2018</td>
<td>National Commemoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-5-2018</td>
<td>Idahot event at the consulate general (together with Swedish consulate general and LGBTI organization SPoD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-6-2018</td>
<td>Pride event at the consulate general (together with a delegation from GroenLinks and RozeLinks from the Netherlands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-7-2018</td>
<td>Running and yoga at the consulate general (together with Rundamental)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-7-2018</td>
<td>Cycling from Istanbul to The Hague (together with Barricade Film Festival who are cycling 4.500 kilometers as a way to raise awareness for people with a disability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-7-2018</td>
<td>Luleburgaz Bisiklete Biniyor network event (together with SmartSolutions, Artgineering and Novusens)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>